

Darren Batstone

Your Wing Back

UNTIL FIVE YEARS AGO, 29-year-old Darren Batstone had his sights set on a career in professional football. An athletic child, Darren spent most of his free time playing sports—soccer, hockey, baseball and, of course, football.

“Football consumed my life,” says Darren. “When not playing, I was watching and reading about my favourite players. I always dreamed of being a part of professional football.”

Darren’s dream translated into a behind-the-goalpost position as a corporate marketing representative for the B.C. Lions. He had been happily working at his marketing job for nearly two years when a vacation to Hawaii with one of his best friends drop-kicked his ambitions in a different direction. Because Darren’s friend worked for the airline and knew the flight crew, the two men were allowed to ride on the flight deck all the way to Hawaii (this was before 9/11).

“I was always curious about aviation. On that flight, all those curiosities started to come together. Flying is something that you know you’re going to do it the minute you experience it; I decided in that five-hour flight that I could do this. Two weeks later I enrolled in flight school.”

Knowledge of the coast and interior came easily. Born in Burnaby, B.C. and raised in Delta, B.C., Darren had the home-field advantage. He obtained his private and commercial pilot licences from Montair at the Boundary Bay Airport, and floatplane training on Okanagan Lake. “I come from a family that likes boating. When I got into flying floatplanes and discovered that I could combine my love of the water with flying, becoming a floatplane pilot just felt natural.”

On a balmy afternoon in early summer while still in floatplane training, he flew to his family vacation spot in eastern Washington. “My grandparents were there. I surprised them by landing on the lake and joining them for lunch. I spent my childhood swimming and waterskiing on that lake so it was a real treat for me to arrive by plane.”




Darren's love of aviation is matched only by his love of football.

He got his first flying job in Pemberton, B.C., doing tours of Whistler and day trips to Vancouver Island. After one year, he moved to Sechelt, B.C. and got first floatplane job at a small airline flying scheduled flights and charters. “I spent just shy of two years there and was lucky enough to get the job with Harbour Air.”

It is a year of celebrations for Darren. In February he married his partner Kristin, a flight attendant with another commercial airline, and April marks his first year with Harbour Air. He plans to start a family and hopes to pass his love

of sports to his kids. “I’d like to be a football dad, a hockey dad,” he says.

But Darren knows aviation is his calling: “I believe that flying is one of the most satisfying careers you can have. The sense of freedom you experience is unlike anything else. You jump into this machine and go to places that other people don’t even know exist, especially here on the West Coast. That’s the one thing that will prevent me from ever leaving aviation, the freedom to explore.” —Belinda Bruce 

This winter, escape for three nights and receive 50% off one of your nights. Contact us for details on this offer.

**SLOW DOWN...
SAVOUR THE LUXURY OF TIME**

**SOOKE HARBOUR
HOUSE**
HOTEL RESTAURANT

Only 45 minutes from Victoria BC Tel: 1-800-889-9688, www.sookeharbourhouse.com